

Renville County

Public Health

2025 Annual Report



Public Health

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Renville County

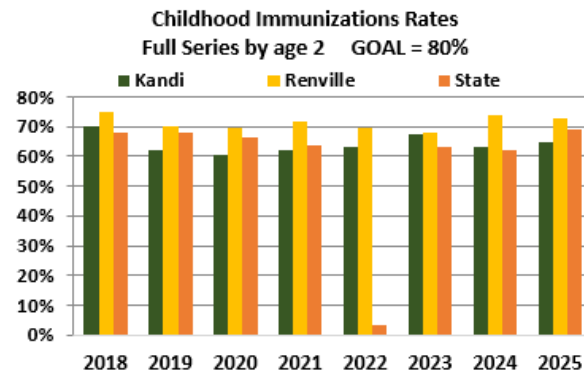
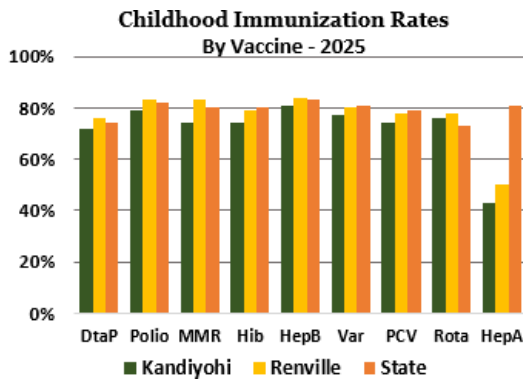
Infectious Disease Prevention and Control

Renville County Public Health (RCPH) works with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and local healthcare providers to help prevent the spread of diseases in our community. Public Health may help by identifying people who are at higher risk, making sure they get follow-up testing, and meeting with sick individuals to support proper medication use. Medical clinics and hospitals are also notified to be on alert for diseases or health conditions that could affect the public's health. *In 2025, our teams stayed alert for measles.*

Immunizations:

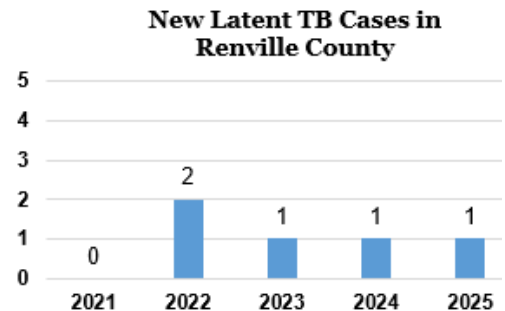
Stopping the spread of infectious disease is one of the oldest and most important roles of public health. Vaccines play a key role in keeping people safe. They protect entire communities, especially young children who are too young to be vaccinated and people who cannot get vaccines due to health issues. Each year, RCPH provides flu shots to students and staff in local schools, as well as to Renville County employees. RCPH uses a system called MIIC (Minnesota Immunization Information Connection) to track vaccine records. MIIC is a statewide system that keeps all vaccination records in one place, helping people stay up to date and get the right vaccines at the right time. *There were also changes in immunization guidance from the state and federal government to keep recommendations aligned. Books to teach on immunizations were provided to schools and daycares that were interested, and immunization awareness efforts were expanded through remaining COVID-19 funding.*

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Influenza Vaccinations Administered	232	208	153	140	128



Refugee & Immigrant Health and Tuberculosis Case Management:

Public Health is often a first stop for refugees and other immigrants who are new to the United States. When we get a referral, we meet with families to collect important health and vaccine information. New arrivals are screened for tuberculosis (TB) and sent to local health care providers for health exams and any needed vaccines. TB case management is an important part of the Infectious Disease program. This includes both latent TB infection (LTBI) and active TB disease. *In 2025, we helped one Renville County resident by managing and finishing their TB medication course. There were no active TB cases in Renville County in 2025.*



Infectious Disease Programs	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Expenditures – Infectious Disease Prevention & Control	\$18,944	\$13,234	\$18,333	\$18,473	\$37,242
Expenditures – Immunizations	\$20,226	\$15,787	\$16,512	\$11,889	\$9,520
% Staff Time	1.5%	1.4%	2.0%	1.7%	2.2%

Emergency Preparedness & Response

Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP):

Being prepared for a disaster can make a big difference in how a community handles tough times. Minnesota’s public health system must be ready to respond to many types of emergencies and help communities recover. These can include floods, tornadoes, disease outbreaks, or even manmade events like terrorism. Public health plays an important role in all of these situations.

In Renville County, the Public Health team works closely with the Southwest Healthcare Preparedness Coalition. This group includes several counties that plan and practice working together in case a disaster is too large for one area to handle alone. RCPH also hosts a Whole Community Collaborative meeting twice a year. These meetings connect community leaders with resources that support the health and safety of Renville County residents.



Public Health and City of Renville staff in Renville for flood response efforts on June 30, 2025

In the summer of 2025, Public Health responded to a request from the Emergency Manager to help flood victims in the City of Renville. Staff went door-to-door to check on residents, make sure they had the resources they needed, and support their mental health and well-being.

We also worked with the Sheriff’s Office to give families emergency medical awareness stickers across the county. Our Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and Community Health Educator taught an emergency readiness lesson at a local school. Public Health also improved staff training in emergency preparedness, helping us respond better in the future. We completed a Multi-Year Integrated Preparedness Plan (MYIPP), an Administrative & Budget Preparedness Plan, and a Risk Communication Plan.

Health Alert Network (HAN):

The Health Alert Network (HAN) is a system used to quickly share important and trusted information when a disease or other event could affect the health of Minnesotans. It helps public health staff, hospitals, clinics, emergency managers, and other partners stay informed and ready to respond. Renville County Public Health reviews messages from the Minnesota Department of Health and shares them with local partners such as hospitals, clinics, and emergency management. These messages must be sent out quickly. Partners are expected to respond within one hour for urgent alerts and within 24 hours for advisories.



MNResponds:

MN Responds is a national network of local volunteers who help improve public health, emergency response, and community resilience. Public Health manages MN Responds, which is a group of trained and certified volunteers who can help during public health emergencies or other community needs. The volunteer coordinator keeps volunteers active and informed by running call-down drills and sending quarterly newsletters.

Public Health Emergency Preparedness	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Expenditures - PHEP	\$45,506	\$60,959	\$44,246	\$53,337	\$32,032
Expenditures - Response Sustainability	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$71,483	\$42,711
% Staff Time	2.3%	3.7%	2.7%	4.4%	3.8%

Public Health Emergency Response – COVID-19:

Public Health continued to respond to COVID-19 using grant-funded projects. Immunization growth charts in English and Spanish, along with coloring books about vaccines, were given to Family Home Visiting and WIC clients and shared at community events. Vaccination reminder billboards were placed near Franklin, Hector, and Olivia, and a banner was displayed on a local CCT bus.



Billboard in Hector, Franklin, and Olivia – February 2025

Funding was first planned to support Teen Mental Health First Aid expansion in Renville County schools. However, the grant was stopped due to federal funding cuts. The funds were later partially restored, but with stricter rules for how they could be used. Public Health purchased updated vaccine thermometers, supported supervisor training, ran local radio ads about vaccines and routine health screenings, and provided reflective consultation sessions for Family Health staff.

Public Health Emergency Response	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Expenditures - PHER	\$172,779	\$52,659	\$35,719	\$63,444	\$36,710
Expenditures – Workforce Development	\$660	\$12,855	\$12,653	\$39,571	\$3,448
% Staff Time	8.5%	2.9%	1.4%	3.2%	< 1%

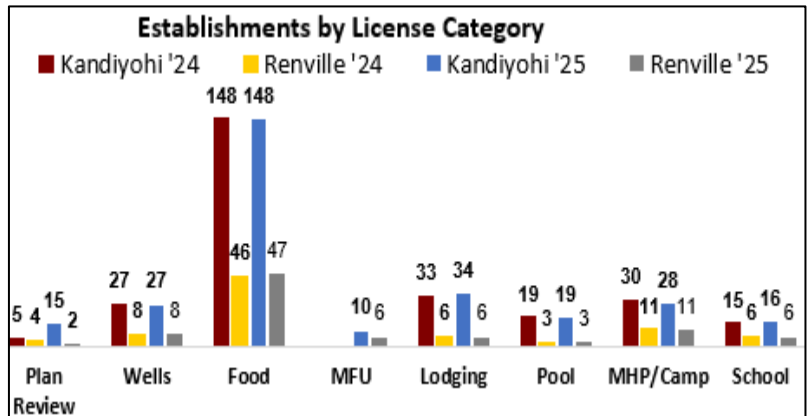
Environmental Health

Environmental health includes important areas such as clean air, clean water, safe food, sanitation, healthy communities, and emergency preparedness. The Environmental Health Program is managed by the Kandiyohi-Renville Community Health Board. This program licenses and inspects places such as restaurants, hotels, manufactured home parks, campgrounds, swimming pools, and spas. It also reviews and approves food stands at special events and mobile food trucks.

Environmental Health Specialists respond to complaints about public health concerns, rental housing issues, and home conditions. They also educate and advise the community on topics such as meth lab cleanup, pest control, water safety, lead, mold, radon, and other environmental health hazards. Renville County has an Environmental Health Ordinance that helps guide this work.

Food, Pools, and Lodging Licensing & Inspection:

A delegation agreement with MDH allows our local program to license certain businesses. Kandiyohi and Renville counties work together to run this program. Staff do regular inspections of all licensed businesses, following state laws and rules. After each inspection, they write a report and share it with the business manager. Education during inspections and follow-up on any issues are important parts of this program.



The Numbers (KaRe)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Licensed FPL Establishments	267	274	273	279	287
Inspections Completed	359	340	331	351	363
FPL Complaints	4	7	5	7	8
FPL Complaints which required enforcement action	0	2	2	5	1
Special Events Licensed	390	332	368	437	345

Food Violations Issued (KaRe)	2022	2023	2024	2025
Priority 1	317	249	218	264
Priority 2	200	192	175	164
Priority 3	394	333	332	484
<p><u>Priority 1 violations:</u> items that directly impact hazards associated with foodborne illness or injury (such as cooking, reheating, cooling, and handwashing).</p> <p><u>Priority 2 violations:</u> items supporting Priority 1 items (such as personnel training, documentation, and labeling).</p> <p><u>Priority 3 violations:</u> item that relates to good retail practice (such as cleaning frequency, operational controls, equipment management and general maintenance).</p>				

Tobacco Licensing and Compliance Checks:

Following our Renville County Tobacco Licensing Ordinance, unannounced compliance checks are completed annually to retailers of tobacco to determine if they are selling to persons under age 21. Education is required of all establishment employees annually and upon new hire; this is attested upon renewal of their license each year.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Pass Rate	21/21	17/21	19/20	17/20	17/19

Renville County Public Health also administers a Tobacco Educate & Congratulate program. This is funded through the Department of Human Services. Staff complete unannounced visits to retailers of tobacco to determine if they are selling to persons under age 21. There is no penalty associated with these checks. If an establishment passes, they are presented with a congratulatory certificate; if they fail, education is provided.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Pass Rate	n/a	21/21	19/19	18/19	18/20

Cannabis and Lower-Potency Hemp Edible Retailer Registration:

An ordinance regulating the retail sale of cannabis and lower-potency hemp edibles was approved in February 2025. Under this ordinance, the Public Health department registers local businesses that choose to sell cannabis and lower-potency hemp edible products. A business must first be licensed by Minnesota’s Office of Cannabis Management before registering locally with the department. There was an application period in October 2025 for businesses that wanted to continue selling these products. Of those who applied, one business was approved and received a registration certificate by the end of 2025. Unannounced compliance checks, similar to tobacco inspections, will be completed at least once per year for each registered business.

<i>Environmental Health Programs</i>	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Expenditures - Environmental Health	\$95,392	\$93,776	\$79,103	\$77,764	\$79,660
Expenditures - Healthy Housing	\$827	\$4,437	\$11,518	n/a	n/a
% Staff Time	5.4%	6.0%	5.1%	4.6%	4.0%

Adult Health

Case Management:

Renville County administers a county-based Medical Assistance program through PrimeWest Health to provide a high-quality, accessible and cost-effective health plan. Case management is provided to specific groups, such as older adults, individuals in nursing homes, and people with special needs, including mental illness, chemical dependency, or complex health issues. This is done through a best-practice dual case management model that includes Public Health nurses and Human Services social workers. These services are available to people enrolled in PrimeWest Health plans and to Renville County members receiving state-funded waiver services. Preventative and primary care are emphasized, with monitoring and consultation to ensure quality care.

PrimeWest completes an annual care plan audit across all programs. This audit took place in April 2025. One corrective action was needed related to ensuring individuals who were not responsive to outreach or refused services are contacted annually and offered case management.

PrimeWest County Case Management	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Average Number of Members Receiving Services	204	214	220	180	194
Long Term Care Consultations/ Health Risk Assessments/ Skilled Nursing Facility Assessments Completed	211	155	112	147	178
Contacts Made by RN Case Manager	1,440	1,303	1,354	1,461	1,624
Medication Reconciliation Visits Made by RN	10	17	11	5	6

State-Funded Waiver County Case Management	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Average Number of Clients Eligible for State-Funded Waiver Programs	66	56	62	76	72
Case Management Contacts Made by RN	488	449	534	472	649

MnCHOICES Assessments:

Staff are trained and certified as MnCHOICES assessors. Nurses, working with a social worker, evaluate client needs and determine the level of services for different community-based care options. These include home care, nursing homes, adult foster care, assisting living, Community First Services and Supports (CFSS), and traumatic brain injury services.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Screening Assessments Completed	109	131	158	185	233

The CFSS program, formerly known as the Personal Care Assistant (PCA) program, has not moved forward as quickly as expected by the Department of Human Services (DHS). Full implementation has been delayed until September 2026. This delay is partly due to increased oversight of 14 high-risk programs by DHS related to fraud investigations.

Home Health Care:

Renville County Public Health operates a Medicare-certified home health care service that has been in place since May 1977. Nurses provide a range of services, including monitoring health conditions, assisting with medical equipment and supplies, teaching patients and families about medications, meal planning, wound care, and dressing changes. They also help patients adjust to changes caused by illness and coordinate overall care. Home Health Aides help with personal care needs such as bathing, exercises, meals, laundry, and light housekeeping. Therapy services may also be provided for individuals who are homebound and meet eligibility requirements. While some clients are acutely ill, most have long-term health conditions and need support to stay in their homes and communities. This care also helps reduce costs by delaying or preventing nursing home placement.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Home Care Clients	83	97	109	124	105
Nurse Visits Made	2,205	1,909	2,038	2,367	2,224
Home Health Aide Visits Made	1,518	1,263	1,211	1,205	1,097
Therapy Visits Made (PT, OT, SLP)	175	266	574	897	400

PrimeWest completed a home health audit in April 2025 related to providing a Notice of Medicare Non-Coverage to patients at least 48 hours before discharge. A Medicare survey was also completed in April, resulting in two corrective actions related to timely receipt of signed therapy orders and medication reviews of patients in customized living settings. No further follow-up was required by MDH.

Staff continue to complete Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) check-ins at the start and end of every home care visit. Compliance remains high at 98-99%, and the program is not at risk for payment withholds from DHS due to successful implementation. The program also received a \$20,000 grant to support EVV implementation.

In July 2025, the OASIS data reporting system changed to require "OASIS for All" assessments at all time points, regardless of payer. This increased reporting requirements and must be completed at multiple states of care, including start of care, transfer, resumption of care, and discharge. This adds non-billable work time, and CMS may eventually use this data to influence payment structures.

A Home Care Lead Worker position was also added to support regulatory compliance.

<i>Adult Health Programs</i>	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Expenditures – Waivered Services	\$234,539	\$225,255	\$231,765	\$279,068	\$322,378
Expenditures – Home Health	\$489,341	\$493,821	\$548,513	\$665,877	\$666,512
Expenditures – Home Health Aide	\$72,920	\$72,862	\$85,118	\$51,978	\$58,533
% Staff Time	42.3%	42.4%	48.5%	46.2%	46.3%

Family Health

Car Seat Education:

Public Health has trained Car Seat Technicians who help families install car seats and teach safe use. *In 2025, technicians trained 36 Human Services staff who work directly with children.*

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Car Seats Given	61	44	85	67	60

Child & Teen Checkup Outreach (C&TC):

RCPH supports the Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC) program by helping families connect with medical, dental, and support services. The program serves children and teens from birth

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Phone Calls Made	349	89	56	34	36
Total Letters Sent	2,710	2,541	2,268	2,107	2,016
Face-to-Face Contacts Made	582	561	520	388	338

through age 20 on Minnesota Health Care Programs. *In 2025, we provided dental care kits with educational materials and gave out child nutrition tools such as plates, stacking utensils, and cups to support healthy habits.*

Child Care Consultations:

Minnesota Rules require child care centers to have a health consultant to review health policies and ensure they protect children's health. A RCPH nurse provides this service. Services include monthly site visits, phone support, training, and policy review. *In 2025, RCPH supported The Learning Funhouse in Bird Island, re-started services with Cedar Mountain Cougar Cub Child Care Center in Franklin, and ended services with Little Stangs Learning Center in Buffalo Lake as they chose to work with their contracted school nurse.*

Early Childhood Screening & School Health:

Early Childhood Screening is a program under Minnesota Department of Education that checks a child's health and development, including health history, nutrition, immunizations, hearing and vision screening. *In 2025, RCPH contracted with RCW to complete screenings. BOLD schools used the program for part of the year and later switched to work with their contracted school nurse.*

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Screening Completed	92	47	80	52

Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHN) & Elevated Blood Lead Levels:

Public Health nurses receive referrals from MDH for infants born with hearing or birth defects. Nurses contact families to help connect them with

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of CYSHN Children Served	5	7	7	14	7

services and support care. *In 2025, new conditions were added to newborn screening including Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) and Guanidinoacetate Methyltransferase (GAMT) Deficiency.*

Children are screened during well-child visits for elevated blood lead levels. If values are high, local public health is notified and nurses work to connect with families to provide education on lead exposure and remediation, arrange a home assessment if needed, and help to connect families for re-testing as needed. *In 2025, Lead case management documentation was moved into the Minnesota Electronic Disease Surveillance System (MEDSS).*

Follow Along Program (FAP):

The Follow Along Program helps parents track their child's development from birth to age 3. Parents complete questionnaires at set ages. A nurse reviews responses and follows up if there are concerns.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Children Served	333	128	112	117	113

Universal Contact:

A nurse contacts all families with newborns and offers a home visit. The visit includes guidance on feeding, sleep, newborn care, safety, and normal newborn behaviors. This visit also helps connect families to other community services when needed.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Families with Newborns who Received a Home Visit	46	37	39	34	28

Family Home Visiting:

Family Home Visiting supports pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and preschool children with developmental or health needs. Visits use the Growing Great Kids curriculum and may continue until the child is about age 2. Services help families support healthy growth and development. Families may also be referred to Help Me Grow for developmental screening and services. *Reflective consultation for staff restarted in 2025 after being paused for several years.*

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Home Visits Made	727	632	664	475	374

Supporting Hands Nurse Family Partnership (SHNFP):

Renville County works with 20 other counties through a joint board to offer SHNFP, an evidence-based home visiting program for first-time mothers. Visits start during pregnancy and continue until the child is age 2. The program provides education, support, and resources. RCPH refers eligible families and also receives referrals. RCPH serves as the fiscal and billing agent for the program.

<i>SHNFP</i>	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Expenditures – SHNFP	\$48,291	\$77,903	\$66,269	\$68,392	\$82,252
% Staff Time (SHNFP)	2.8%	4.6%	4.2%	3.7%	4.1%

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):

WIC is a nutrition and breastfeeding support program for pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and children up to age 5. Families receive nutrition counseling, healthy food support, breastfeeding help, and referrals to health and social services. *The participant app was updated in 2025.*

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Estimated Value of Food Prescriptions	\$59 per child, \$70 per pregnant mom, \$133 per fully breastfeeding mom *per month	\$78 per child, \$112 per pregnant mom, \$170 per fully breastfeeding mom *per month	→	→	\$80 per child, \$112 per pregnant mom, \$170 per fully breastfeeding mom *per month
Number of Participants Served	547	570	608	574	511
Average Monthly Participants	364	380	420	394	358

PACT for Families:

Putting All Communities Together (PACT) for Families is a five-county partnership that supports children’s mental health and family services. RCPH staff participate in their meetings and projects. The Public Health Director also serves on the Executive Board as PACT’s public health representative and the Human Resources subcommittee.

<i>Family Health Programs</i>	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Expenditures – C&TC	\$53,038	\$41,785	\$39,304	\$41,110	\$50,031
Expenditures – School Health	\$78,932	\$9,189	\$2,824	\$3,019	\$1,641
Expenditures – WIC	\$93,924	\$110,771	\$107,861	\$97,733	\$94,796
Expenditures – MCH Prenatal	\$373,409	\$318,853	\$292,016	\$321,111	\$319,990
Expenditures – Follow Along	\$4,953	\$3,479	\$3,766	\$3,792	\$4,256
% Staff Time (except SHNFP)	28.9%	27.0%	25.6%	21.5%	20.9%

Health Promotion

Community Health Education:

Renville County Public Health supports the health and wellness of people who live, work, and spends time in Renville County. Services include free blood pressure checks, foot care clinics, health education, and connections to local resources. *In 2025, a priority was Responsible Beverage Server Training. In partnership with the Renville County Sheriff's Office, training was offered to local businesses with monthly opportunities for servers to attend. Health education was also provided in schools, at Traditions!, and through continued support of DARE programming expansion from BLHS to RCW.*



Participation in Outdoor Parks Day on May 7, 2025



Community Health Education at Traditions! in August 2025

Kandiyohi-Renville Suicide and Mental Health Action Coalition (KR-SMAC):

KR-SMAC is a group of community partners working together to raise awareness about mental health and suicide prevention. The group also helps share resources to support mental well-being in the community.

Renville Alliance for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drugs (RAPAD):

RAPAD is a coalition of community members and organizations working to prevent underage use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Members include volunteers, parents, students, law enforcement, schools, businesses, healthcare providers, and community groups. Renville County Public Health supports RAPAD and participates in meetings and activities.

Cannabis and Substance Use Prevention (CSUP):

In 2025, the CSUP grant supported the work of the Community Health Educator and Prevention Specialist. The grant helped fund printed cannabis prevention curriculum that meets new state requirements starting in the 2026–2027 school year. It also supported DARE programming at RCW and BLHS schools. Positive Community Norms (PCN) messaging continued at school sporting events through video boards at local schools.

Opioid Settlement:

Renville County began receiving money in 2022 from a nationwide Opioid Settlement. Public Health helps guide how these funds are used to address opioid-related issues in the community. *In 2025, the Community Health Educator and Prevention Specialist created SCOPE Renville Co., an advisory group of 15–20 community members from different sectors. SCOPE stands for Sustainable Change of Opioid Prevention Efforts. The group will begin meeting in January 2026 to help guide how settlement funds are used in Renville County.*

Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP):

SHIP supports community efforts to improve health and well-being. Focus areas include active living, healthy eating, tobacco-free living, and overall wellness. Through an equity lens, SHIP works through partnerships to improve policies and environments that support better health for all residents.

From 2020-2025, SHIP awarded \$237,111 in partner grants. Renville County partners included (* indicates partners worked with in 2024-2025):

- Active Living Plans in the cities of Buffalo Lake, Olivia, and Renville
- Community Gardens in Fairfax, Franklin, and Sacred Heart*
- Renville County Food Shelf SuperShelf transformation
- BLHS, BOLD*, Cedar Mountain, GFW, and RCW Schools
- Renville County Parks trail projects
- Dakota Wicohan
- Cities of Bird Island*, Franklin*, and Olivia*
- Farmers Markets in Bird Island, Buffalo Lake, Fairfax and Olivia -along with Renville County EDA*
- Renville County Masters Gardeners and UMN Extension
- ACTS (Adult Client Training Services)
- Tobacco projects with RAPAD, Educate & Congratulate, and Tobacco Free Parks initiatives



Power of Produce tokens at local Farmer's Market in Summer of 2025

The Community Health Strategist provided technical assistance to many local groups:

- ACEs Coalition
- Kandiyohi-Renville CLT (Community Leadership Team)
- Feeding Renville Coalition
- BOLD Community Education Board
- Renville County Food Shelf Board
- RAPAD Coalition
- City of Olivia Park & Rec Board
- Island HUB Board
- Kandiyohi-Renville Suicide and Mental Health Action Coalition (KR-SMAC)
- Renville County Wellness and Housing committees
- Transportation Groups- CCT Board of Directors, MMRTCC and ATP-SW Transportation Partnership
- Renville County Pickleball Group
- PACT for Families
- Educate & Congratulate licensed tobacco store checks
- Southwest MN Regional Food Network
- Rooted in Wellness Workplace Collaborative

The Community Health Strategist also began work on a Climate-Smart Food Systems – Regional Food Coordination grant and serves as a Southwest MN Regional Food Coordinator. This role helps strengthen the local food system by building partnerships, sharing resources, and improving access to healthy, locally grown food.

<i>Health Promotion Programs</i>	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Expenditures – Health Promotion	\$25,172	\$24,224	\$22,608	\$34,744	\$24,559
Expenditures – SHIP w/Projects;	\$136,759	\$109,926	\$142,714	\$106,065	\$142,592
Expenditures – SHIP w/out Projects	\$72,619	\$72,616	\$75,193	\$80,455	\$102,930
Substance Use Prevention	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$50,167
Climate-Smart Food Systems	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$3,921
% Staff Time	5.2%	6.2%	6.0%	6.0%	7.5%

Kandiyohi-Renville Community Health Board

In Minnesota, public health is a shared responsibility between state and local governments, as outlined in the Local Public Health Act (Chapter 145A). This system works as a partnership between local Community Health Boards (CHBs) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Together, they form the Community Health Services (CHS) system, which combines resources to meet public health needs efficiently and cost-effectively. The public health departments of Kandiyohi County and Renville County are joined under one Community Health Board. In this partnership, Renville County Public Health serves as the CHS Administrator, and Kandiyohi County Public Health serves as the fiscal host.

- Local public health is funded through a mix of local, state, and federal funding, as well as fees and reimbursements. This funding supports responses to public health needs and helps improve community health. The CHS system is flexible, allowing it to meet the unique needs of different communities and support clear communication between local and state health departments. Strong partnerships and shared goals are key to its success.
- The CHS Administrator for the Kandiyohi-Renville Community Health Board manages public health grants for both counties. This includes applying for grants, completing required reports, and ensuring compliance with Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) updates. The Administrator also oversees the community health assessment and planning process, approves required annual reporting, and leads Community Health Board meetings. They ensure the CHB meets its responsibilities, sign routine documents, and participate in state-level meetings and workgroups through the State Community Health Services Advisory Committee (SCHSAC).

2025 Kandiyohi-Renville Community Health Board (CHB) Governing Members:

- Commissioner Greg Snow, Renville County – Vice-Chair and SCHSAC Alternate
- Commissioner Dave Hamre, Renville County
- Commissioner Steve Gardner, Kandiyohi County – Chair and SCHSAC Representative
- Commissioner Dale Anderson, Kandiyohi County
- Lucy Brink, Kandiyohi County Community Member
- Julie Remer, Renville County Community Member
- Chery Johnson, Community Member At Large

Staff Ex-Officio and Other Members:

- Sara Benson, Renville County Public Health Director and CHS Administrator
- Caroline Chan, Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services Director and Fiscal Agent
- Lisa Herges, Renville County Administrator
- Kelsey Baker, Kandiyohi County Administrator
- Dr. Thomas Gilles, Renville County Medical Consultant
- Dr. Mary Amon, Kandiyohi County Medical Consultant
- Kelsie Kingstrom, Renville County Attorney
- Shane Baker, Kandiyohi County Attorney
- Leah Jesser, Minnesota Department of Health Public Health Systems Consultant

Building on our Community Health Assessment completed in 2024, we finalized our Community Health Improvement Plan. This plan focuses on the top health concerns in Kandiyohi and Renville Counties: an aging population, mental well-being, and substance use. We created an action plan with goals and strategies for each priority area. A joint task force from both counties meets regularly to work together and move these strategies forward in the community.



Public Health staff from Renville and Kandiyohi Counties attending a joint training session on January 31, 2025

In 2025, we finalized our Strategic Plan with updated mission, values, and vision as well as action plan which focuses on empowering our workforce, generating and sustaining funding, and projecting the value of Public Health and our Community Health Board.

Mission

“Kandiyohi-Renville Community Health empowers and engages all who live, work, learn, and play in our communities to prevent harm, promote health, and protect well-being.”

Values

<p>Integrity. We are sincere, fair, trustworthy, and truthful, ensuring that everyone is treated with courtesy.</p>	<p>Respect. We listen and seek to understand all voices, promoting inclusivity and equity in our work.</p>	<p>Adaptability. We embrace change and flexibility, proactively responding to the evolving needs of our community with passion and expertise.</p>	<p>Collaboration. We build positive relationships through partnerships and community engagement, fostering lasting, innovative, and inclusive change.</p>	<p>Advocacy. We champion equity by empowering individuals and communities to advocate for themselves and by addressing disparities with a unified voice.</p>
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Vision

“We envision a Community Health Board where the community actively shapes priorities and participates in initiatives, our workforce demonstrates sustained dedication and expertise, and the public consistently perceives us as transparent, reliable, and responsive. Through enduring, collaborative partnerships, coordinated systems, and strategic planning, we effectively address public health challenges, seamlessly integrate programs across the CHB, and maintain a performance management and quality improvement system that drives measurable results. Supported by sustainable and generous funding, we advance innovation, stability, and initiatives that go beyond foundational needs.”

Empowered Community: Listening to community voices and fostering shared action to create meaningful change.

Committed Workforce: A well-resourced, skilled, and passionate team, confident in their roles and dedicated to advancing public health with purpose and enthusiasm.

Trusted CHB: Recognized as a reliable, transparent, and approachable public health partner that the community turns to with confidence.

Reliable Partnerships: Dependable collaborations built on mutual trust, where partners can count on us—and we can count on them—to achieve shared success and community impact.

Robust CHB Infrastructure: Equipped with the tools, skills, and collaborative strength to adapt, respond, and meet evolving public health needs while growing together with our community.

Increased Connectedness: Unified efforts and shared programs that strengthen collaboration across the CHB.

Measurable and Sustainable PMQI System: A continuous improvement culture built on data, accountability, and long-term impact.

Sustainable and Generous Funding: Stable, forward-looking resources that support innovation, growth, and initiatives beyond the essentials, ensuring long-term community health benefits

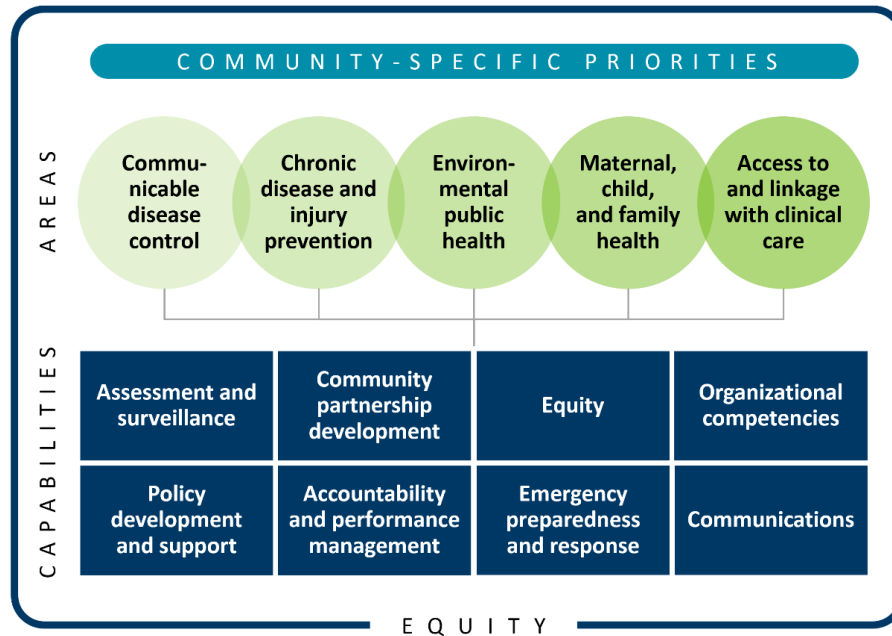
<i>CDC Infrastructure</i>		2024	2025
Expenditures - CDC Infrastructure		\$39,933	\$38,755
% Staff Time		2.6%	< 1%

<i>CHS Program</i>	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Expenditures - CHS Admin	\$88,244	\$116,489	\$89,837	\$142,627	\$121,656
% Staff Time	3.1%	5.9%	4.4%	4.7%	3.9%

Renville County Public Health Services

Foundational public health responsibilities are the basic services every public health department provides to keep communities safe and healthy. We receive a grant to help support our activities within these responsibility requirements, which are focused primarily on communications, community health education and strategies, organizational competency in our community health supervisor, among others.

Foundational Public Health Responsibilities



<i>Foundational Public Health Responsibilities</i>	2024	2025
Expenditures - FPHR	\$22,563	\$156,112
% Staff Time	1.3%	6.9%

In 2025, we restructured our department to include a Community Health team. This team consists of a Community Health Supervisor who oversees the work of the Community Health Educator and Prevention Specialist, the Community Health Strategist, the Environmental Health Specialist, the Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Communications Coordinator, and the Public Health Planner (shared jointly with Kandiyohi County).

Collaborative for Rural Public Health Innovation (CRPHI):

CRPHI is a regional partnership of local public health agencies in southern Minnesota, along with representatives from MDH and Minnesota State University – Mankato, working together to strengthen and modernize rural public health systems. In addition to finding ways to share resources, one of its goals is to explore how students and faculty can support local public health agencies with important work like health communication, data collection, and data analysis. The Public Health Director serves on the Executive Committee. The Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Communications Coordinator serves on the Communications subcommittee, and the Public Health Planner serves on the Assessment and Surveillance subcommittee. In 2025, the group created a website and shared slogan: “That’s the #PowerofPublicHealth”. Visit <https://powerofpublichealthmn.com/> to learn more.



CRPHI was awarded an Association of Minnesota Counties County Achievement Award on December 9, 2025

Communications:

The Communications Coordinator manages the department’s social media accounts and creates and shares mailers, flyers, and other materials to promote events and services. This role helps share important health information, raise awareness, and encourage healthy choices in the community.

In 2025, this role shifted from the Community Health Educator to the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. Since then, our public-facing pages have grown by 26%, and social media engagement has increased. To further improve communication, we launched a monthly newsletter using Constant Contact. This helps share updates, promote partnerships, and highlight training opportunities. We also created a Linktree and a YouTube channel to share Public Health programs and provide educational videos.

Student Nurse Experiences:

We partner with colleges to offer Student Nurse Experiences. Our staff mentor helps each student create a schedule filled with a variety of public health experiences.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Students	2	6	3	3	2
Number of Student Hours	150+	170+	71+	72	90.5

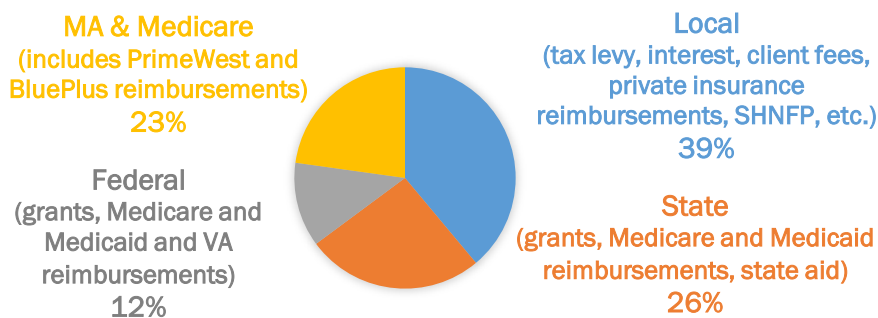
Funding:

Renville County Public Health is funded through several sources, including the county tax levy, interest income, insurance reimbursements for billable services (from private insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid), client fees, and grants. In 2025, a total of 18 grants and one pass-through grant were administered.

Most of the grants are specific to the programs they support:

- **Adult Health:** Electronic Visit Verification Implementation
- **Emergency Preparedness & Response:** Federal COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation; Public Health Emergency Preparedness; Response Sustainability
- **Family Home Visiting:** Child & Teen Checkups; Children and Youth with Special Health Needs; Maternal Child Health -Title V; Follow Along Program; Perinatal Hepatitis B; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; Women, Infants and Children; Strong Foundations (pass-through to Supporting Hands Nurse-Family Partnership agency)
- **Health Promotion:** Statewide Health Improvement Partnership; Climate-Smart Food Systems – Regional Food Coordination; Cannabis and Substance Use Prevention
- **Infectious Disease Prevention & Control:** Eliminating Health Disparities
- **Public Health General:** Local Public Health Grant; Foundational Public Health Responsibilities; CDC Federal Infrastructure

FUNDING SOURCES



All RCPH Programs	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Expenditures	\$2,055,818	\$1,858,261	\$1,817,208	\$2,213,999	\$2,379,477
Staff Full-Time Equivalents (FTE's)	19.71	18.56	18.16	19.82	20.36

Credit to Renville County Public Health Staff in 2025:

- Amy Agre, Medical Accounting Technician
- Polly Ahrens, Public Health Nurse
- Taylor Amsden, Home Health Aid
- Sara Benson, Public Health Director & Kandiyohi-Renville CHS Administrator
- Samantha Best, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
- Britany Egge, Public Health Nurse
- Rose Erickson, Community Health Strategist
- Jeff Filipek, SHIP Coordinator
- Cindy Firme, Adult Health Supervisor
- Alex Gay, Finance Officer & Office Support Supervisor
- Jess Johnson, Community Health Educator & Prevention Specialist
- Darcy Klingelutz, Public Health Nurse
- Stacey Larson, Public Health Nurse
- Pam Leach, Registered Nurse
- Carol Loftness, Licensed Practical Nurse
- Kaylee Padnos, Public Health Nurse
- Forrest Rice, Public Health Planner
- Jen Scharfencamp, Finance Officer & Office Support Supervisor
- Krista Schneider, Administrative Assistant
- Ben Schroeder, Environmental Health Specialist
- Katie Slagter, Family Health Supervisor
- Tristan Stauffacher, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Communications Coordinator
- Joey Steidl, Environmental Health Specialist
- Sami Swanson, Administrative Assistant
- Melissa Swyter, Community Health Supervisor
- Tara Wertish, Licensed Practical Nurse
- Lacy Zeitz, Registered Nurse



Renville County Public Health staff - January 31, 2025